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CORRECTION ISSUED

Action

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Info RMR TO: Secretary of State

SS NO: 1247, DECEMBER 10, 1 PM

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I BELIEVE KHRUSHCHEV'S LONG CONVERSATION WITH HUMPHREY ON
BERLIN QUESTION INDICATES REALIZATION ON HIS PART OF
DANGERS INVOLVED AND CONCERN OVER OUTCOME. HE AND OTHER
PRESIDIUM MEMBERS HAVE SHOWN GREAT INTEREST IN WESTERN
REACTION AND AMONG OTHERS HAVE QUESTIONED MY SWEDISH,
AUSTRIAN AND INDIAN COLLEAGUES. WHILE IT IS CLEAR THAT
NEITHER KHRUSHCHEV NOR SOVIET GOVERNMENT AS A WHOLE WISHES
TO RUN REAL RISK OF WAR, THEY WILL BE VERY RELUCTANT TO
BACK DOWN IF ISSUE IS POSED IN SUCH A WAY AS TO INVOLVE
GREAT LOSS OF PRESTIGE FOR SOVIET UNION. IF (BEGIN UNDERLINE)
IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES (END UNDERLINE) WE SHOULD USE FORCE
TO MAINTAIN ACCESS TO BERLIN THEY ARE CAPABLE, IN MY
JUDGMENT, OF ALLOWING EAST GERMANS TO RESPOND WITH FORCE.
IT THEREFORE SEEMS IMPORTANT THAT IN HANDLING THE SITUATION
WE LEAVE OPEN SOME WAY FOR KHRUSHCHEV TO RETREAT AND SAVE
FACE.

DIFFICULTY OF DEVISING ANY COUNTER PROPOSALS ON BERLIN ARE
OBVIOUS BUT WOULD APPEAR TO ME THERE ARE ELEMENTS FOR A
BARGAIN WHICH WOULD LEAVE NEITHER SIDE MATERIALLY WORSE OFF
AND WHICH SOVIETS MIGHT BE BROUGHT TO ACCEPT IF WEST IS
FIRMLY UNITED IN OPPOSITION TO CURRENT SOVIET PROPOSALS AND
PREPARED IN LAST RESORT TO USE FORCE. AS TO CONCESSIONS ON
OUR PART THERE IS A WIDE RANGE OF POSSIBILITIES RUNNING FROM
RADICAL TO RELATIVELY MINOR WINDOW DRESSING ACTIONS. FOR
EXAMPLE, WE

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-2- 1247, DECEMBER 10, 1 PM., FROM MOSCOW.

EXAMPLE, WE COULD CONSIDER SUCH ACTIONS AS 1) WITHDRAWAL OUR TROOPS AND THEIR SUBSTITUTION BY WEST GERMAN FORCES AND INCORPORATION OF WEST BERLIN INTO WEST GERMANY; 2) SOME STEPS TOWARD DE FACTO RECOGNITION OF GDR; 3) TURNING OVER FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ADMINISTRATION WEST BERLIN TO GERMANS, ALTHOUGH KEEPING OUR TROOPS THERE; 4) TERMINATION OF OVERT WESTERN ACTIVITIES IN BERLIN SUCH AS OPERATION RADIO STATION, ETC.

AS AGAINST CONCESSIONS OF THIS NATURE PRINCIPAL CONCESSION FROM SOVIET SIDE WOULD PRESUMABLY BE RELATED TO PROBLEM OF ACCESS. WE MIGHT OBTAIN RECOGNITION RIGHT OF COMMERCIAL AIR ACCESS, SOME TYPE OF CORRIDOR UNDER WEST GERMAN CONTROL, ETC. IT MIGHT ALSOBE POSSIBLE TO DEVISE SCHEME INVOLVING CREATION FREE CITY INCLUDING EAST BERLIN. THIS DOES NOT, HOWEVER, APPEAR TO ME TO BE PROFITABLE LINE OF APPROACH SINCE SOVIETS UNLIKELY MAKE CONCESSION ON THIS POINT AND AT SAME TIME AGREE TO SATISFACTORY ARRANGEMENTS TO ENSURE ACCESS.

I DO NOT BELIEVE SOVIET ACTION ON BERLIN WAS DESIGNED TO LEAD TO DISCUSSION OF GERMAN PROBLEM AS A WHOLE NOR DO I BELIEVE THEY WOULD FORMALLY AGREE TO A MEETING FOR THIS PURPOSE. NEVERTHELESS I THINK THAT AT A MEETING ON THE BERLIN QUESTION IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO DRAW THEM INTO SUCH A DISCUSSION PARTICULARLY IF APPROACHED FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF EUROPEAN SECURITY.

THOMPSON

DHP

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